

CD 2004 -- 28

University of Toronto
Faculty of Music
**Electroacoustic Music
Concert**

Sunday March 7, 2004
2:30 pm
Walter Hall



Melt

Possible Spaces no. 8

Spadina Minilogues

Possible Spaces no. 9

Base Metals

Street Song #1

Dennis Patrick

Gustav Ciamaga

Gustav Ciamaga

Gustav Ciamaga

Denis Smalley

David Ogborn

Intermission

In memory of Luciano Berio (1925-2003)

A-Ronne (1975)

Luciano Berio

Text by Edoardo Sanguineti

Street Song #1: In 2003, I amassed a large collection of recordings from the anti-war marches that took place in Toronto. All of the sounds were captured with an ancient microcassette recorder. It struck me that the rawness of the sounds recorded in this way itself expresses something of the emotion of those days. The challenge I have set myself in the pieces I am continuing to produce from this material, including in *Street Song #1* (based on the anti-war march "1-2-3-4 We don't want your bloody war"), is to give these recordings an artistic form without sacrificing their original expressive quality.

David Ogborn is a sound artist and scholar. Notable performances of his work have included the premiere of *Queen & McCaul* at Sound Junction II in Sheffield, *Blackbird* by the Manitoba Chamber Orchestra, and *Incantation 3* by the Winnipeg Jazz Orchestra. He is presently a doctoral candidate at the University of Toronto, with ongoing research interests including the life and works of composer Luigi Nono, the aesthetics of Walter Benjamin and Theodor Adorno, and the use of functional programming for electronic music.

All the metal sources in **Base Metals** (2000) derive from sound sculptures created by the artist Derek Shiel. From the wide range of objects I selected those with the internal resonant properties that could provide me with variegated spectral families. Some possessed intervallic and tonal properties, others were inharmonic or noisier, and some sounded more synthetic than truly metallic. Although there are a number of orchestrated impacts and resonances in the piece, I was less interested in the clash of metal than in more sustained morphologies. Thus there is a focus on varied pushes, surges, swirls and sweeps of spectral energy, balanced with calmer drifts, undulations and dips, all of which move in and out of more clearly pulsed moments. These motions are also spatial so there are approaches, emergences, dispersals and distant disappearances, sometimes leaving behind the residues of spectral trails. The metal-based families, which are hardly ever absent, are brought into relations with a few other sound-types, and those who know my other pieces might spot the occasional refugee-sound from the past, recontextualized.

Denis Smalley studied music at the University of Canterbury (New Zealand) — Diploma in organ performance, and MusB — and the Victoria University of Wellington (New Zealand) — BMus honours in composition. He then taught music at Wellington College for three years prior to gaining a French Government bursary which enabled him to study in Paris (France) in 1971. He took the electroacoustic music course run by the Groupe de recherches musicales (Ina-GRM). He was among the first composers to complete the newly established "Diplôme de musique électroacoustique et de recherche musicale." He then moved to the UK, where he completed the DPhil in composition at the University of York. In 1975 he took up a Composition Fellowship at the University of East Anglia (Norwich, UK) and was appointed Lecturer in 1976 (Senior Lecturer from 1988), with special responsibility for electroacoustic composition activities and courses. In 1994 he was appointed Professor of Music and Head of the Department of Music at City University (London, UK).

His music has received a number of international awards: the Fylkingen Prize (Stockholm, Sweden, 1975), Bourges Electroacoustic Awards (France, 1977, 1983, 1992), the Special Prize of the International Confederation of Electroacoustic Music (CIME, 1983), Newcomp (USA, 1984), and the Golden Nica of Prix Ars Electronica (Linz, Austria, 1988).

He has taken a keen interest in the performance of electroacoustic music, and pioneered the concept of sound diffusion in the UK, developing the first sound diffusion system from 1976 at the University of East Anglia (Norwich, UK).

Denis Smalley is also notable as a writer on the aesthetics of electroacoustic music. In particular, he has developed the notion of "spectromorphology" (the shaping of sound spectra through time), expanding concepts initially articulated by Pierre Schaeffer in order to explain sonic relationships in their musical context. The most widely read article — "Spectromorphology: Explaining Sound-Shapes" — has been published in English, French and Italian.

The subject of **A-Ronne** is the elementary vocalization of a text and its transformation into something equally elementary, perhaps, but hard to describe. It is not, in fact, a musical composition in the sense usually given that term - although the procedures through which it develops are frequently "musical" (use of inflection and intonation, elaboration of alliterations and transitions between sound and noise, occasional use of melody, polyphony and elementary heterophony). The musical sense of A-Ronne is primordial, that is, common to all experience, from the spoken language of everyday to the theatre, where changes in expression implicate and document changes in significance. For this reason I prefer to call this work a documentary on a poem by Edoardo Sanguineti, just as we speak of a documentary on a painting or on a foreign country. Sanguineti's poetry, subjected to various readings, is not treated as a text to be put too music but rather as a text to be analyzed, and as a generator of local situations and different expressions. Lastly, A-Ronne is also something of a representative madrigal, the "theatre for the ear" of the late 16th Century in Italy, and something of a naïf painting (vocal), where the broad canvas of situations, extensive as it is, can always be linked to the elementary, to recognizable feelings and states of mind: meetings between friends, discussions in the public square, words spoken in the confessional, the barracks, the bedroom, and so on. Sanguineti's poem - which, in A-Ronne, is repeated twenty times or so, reoccurring in circular manner - presents three themes: in the first part, the theme of the Beginning, in the second part the theme of the Middle and in the third that of the End. It is rigorously constructed on quotations from various languages, ranging from the Gospel according to John (in Latin, Greek and German: Luther's translation and changes made by Goethe, in Faust) through a verse by Eliot, a verse by Dante, to the first words of the Communist Manifesto; from an essay by Barthes on Bataille to the last three words, the three signs (ette, conne, ronne) with which the alphabet ended after the "Z" in ancient times, giving rise to the now-forgotten saying, "from A to Ronne" in place of "from A to Z". This poem of Sanguineti's is thus, in addition to everything else, a highly articulated and discontinuous sequence of idiomatic expressions. And this is why musical idiomatic expressions appear so frequently in A-Ronne. The occasional sung episodes do not, in fact, have any musical significance of their own. They are moments among the many - and perhaps the simplest - in the liturgy of vocal gestures. Only the brief conclusive episode, based on a series of very elementary harmonic "alliterations", has a musical autonomy of its own. Accordingly, the musical sense of A-Ronne is not to be found in the sung episodes but in the relationship established between a written text and a "grammar" of vocal behavior, between a poem that always remains faithful to its words and a vocal articulation that continuously shifts and changes their meaning. What happens in fact is that the two dimensions (that of written text and that of vocal behavior) interact in ways that are always different, producing meanings that are always new. This is exactly like what happens in vocal music in general as well as in everyday language, where the relationship between the two dimensions (grammar and sound) is basically responsible for the infinite possibilities of human discourse and song.

Luciano Berio

A - RONNE

by Edoardo Sanguineti

I.

a: ah: ha: hamm: anfang:

in: in principio: nel mio

principio:

am anfang: in my beginning:

ach: in principio erat

das wort: en arkè en:

verbum: am anfang war: in principio

erat: der sinn: caro nel mio principio: o logos: è la mia

carne:

am anfang war: in principio: die kraft:

die tat:

nel mio principio:

II.

nel mezzo: in medio:

nel mio mezzo: où commence?: nel mio corpo:

où commence le corps humain?

nel mezzo: nel mezzo del cammino: nel mezzo

della mia carne:

car la bouche est le commencement:

nel mio principio

è la mia bocca: parce qu'il a opposition: paradigme:

la bouche:

l'anus:

in my beginning: aleph: is my end:

ein gespenst geht um:

III.

l'uomo ha un centro: qui est la sexe:

en meso en: le

phallus:

nel mio centro è il mio corpo:

nel mio principio è la mia parola: nel mio

centro è la mia bocca: nalle mia fine: am ende:

in my end: run: in my

beginning:

l'âme du mort sort par le pied:

par l'anus: nella mia fine

wae das wort:

in my end is my music:

ette, conne, ronne: